



DEFENSIVE DRIVING & OTHER PRECAUTIONS

12

The purpose of this chapter is to provide you with a discussion of the principles of Defensive Driving, and advice on safety precautions to help you avoid being a Distracted Driver and other precautions that will help you deal with potential life threatening situations including “Road Rage”.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

If every driver always obeyed the rules, and always behaved in a sensible way, driving would be simpler and safer. Unfortunately, this ideal situation does not exist. Instead we frequently encounter drivers who behave unpredictably or recklessly, and other highway users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, who ignore the rules that apply to them.

“Defensive Driving” means being constantly aware of the driving conditions, planning ahead, anticipating dangers and taking the right action so as not to come in contact with any obstacle or other vehicle.

To protect yourself, you must learn to drive defensively.

This means anticipating errors by others and preparing to compensate for their mistakes. In addition, you must always behave in a correct and sensible fashion yourself so that you do not confuse other drivers.

All of us want to avoid collisions that result in personal injury or even death. But, even when there is no personal injury, a collision means inconvenience and auto repair costs. It may also result in a court appearance and fines, as well as increased insurance rates. You have a great financial stake in your own good driving record. Driving defensively will help protect your life and your driving record.

Courtesy and consideration toward others are the most important driving attitudes you can develop. They are the key to safe driving.

Concentration and Alertness Are Important Elements

Concentration is one of the most important elements of safe and defensive driving. You must develop the habit of keeping your mind on driving. The driver’s seat is no place for daydreaming, site-seeing or distracting conversations.

Drive Alert —The defensive driving rules are simple and easy to follow. If you follow them, you should be able to avoid getting yourself into difficult situations. The rules are:

- Use your rearview mirrors. Constantly check the traffic behind you. Always check mirrors before changing lanes.
- Stay out of another driver’s blind spot(s). Do not travel in a position where the driver ahead of you cannot observe your vehicle in his mirrors; he might pull out in front of you to pass a car.
- Expect the other driver to do the WRONG thing, and have a plan of action prepared to counter his error.

Drive Cautiously

Remember to always use the two-second rule. Periodically test your following distance by picking out a stationary object on the roadway ahead and doing the “1,001, 1,002” count. Remember if you reach that point before counting to 1,002 you are following too closely. If this is the case, slow down in order to lengthen your following distance. Remember on high-speed interstates, when following large commercial trucks or buses and in inclement weather or limited visibility conditions it is safest to increase this following distance to at least 3 to 4 seconds.

Foresight

In driving terms, foresight means being able to size up traffic situations as quickly as possible and being prepared to take corrective action. Safe driving requires exercising good judgment and recognizing the proper choices to make in any given traffic situation.

- Suppose you are driving down a steep hill; you apply your brake, but your vehicle does not decrease in speed.

Should you pump the brake? – or – Shift to a lower gear?

Apply the emergency brake? – or – Run into something?

- Perhaps you see a driver traveling in the wrong direction on a one-way street you are driving on.

Should you honk the horn? – or – Stop?

Flash your lights? – or – Move to another lane?

Any of these choices could be the right thing to do. It all depends on how you evaluate your driving situation and the existing conditions. Information in this chapter of the manual will give you tips on safe ways to evaluate and respond to these and similar roadway situations

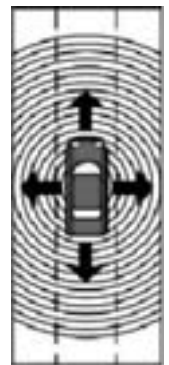
As a driver you will be constantly making decisions every mile you drive. There is a right way to make these decisions. It is known as defensive driving.

Driving Space or “Safety Cushion”

Sharing Space – You must always share the road with others. The more distance you keep between yourself and everyone else, the more time you have to react. This space is like a “safety cushion”. The more you have, the safer you will be. This section describes how to make sure you have enough space around you when you drive.

Try to maintain a safety cushion to the front, rear and each side of your vehicle at all times in order to provide an area of escape or prevention should an emergency occur.

Always drive in such a manner that you are able to control the space (safety cushion or zone) between your vehicle and others. At times this may mean slowing or increasing your speed (within lawful limits only).



1. SPACE AHEAD: Rear-end crashes are very common. Rear-end crashes are caused by drivers following too closely (tailgating) to be able to stop before hitting the vehicle ahead when it suddenly slows or stops. The best way to maintain this safety cushion is to follow the basic 2-Second Rule. Also leave extra space when approaching railroad crossings or when stopped behind another vehicle on a hill or curve.

2. SPACE BEHIND: It is not always easy to manage the space behind your vehicle. However, you can help keep a driver behind you at a safe distance by keeping a steady speed and using turn signals in advance when you have to slow down or turn. Every now and then you may find yourself being followed too closely or being “tailgated” by another driver. If there is a right lane, move over to the right. If there is no right lane, wait until the road ahead is clear and passing is legal, then slowly reduce your speed. This will encourage the tailgater to drive around you. Never slow down quickly to discourage a tailgater. All that does is increase your risk of being hit from behind.

3. SPACE TO BOTH SIDES: You need space on both sides of your vehicle to have room to turn or change lanes. Avoid driving in blind spots of other vehicles. When meeting oncoming vehicles on a two-lane road stay slightly to the right of your lane so as not to “crowd” the centerline. Be courteous and move to the left lane on multi-lane roads when other vehicles are trying to merge into traffic. Keep extra space between your vehicle and parked cars, pedestrians and bicyclists (especially children) on the roadside. Two key rules about space to the side includes:

- “Split the difference” – between two hazards. For example, steer a middle course between oncoming traffic and parked vehicles. However, if one is more dangerous than the other, leave a little more space on the most dangerous side. If the oncoming vehicle is a semi-truck, leave a more room on the side that the truck will pass on instead of the side with the parked cars.
- “Take potential hazards one at a time.” For example, if you are overtaking a bicyclist and an oncoming vehicle is approaching, slow down, let the vehicle pass first so that you can then safely move to the left to give room to the bicycle.

MERGING DEFENSIVELY: A minimum four-second gap is needed whenever you change lanes, enter a roadway or when your lane merges with another traffic lane. If you need to cross several lanes, take them one at a time. NEVER cut across multiple lanes, it can tie up traffic and even cause you to have a collision or create a crash between other vehicles trying to avoid your sudden and unsafe maneuver.

HANDLING INTERSECTIONS DEFENSIVELY: When you cross traffic, you need a large enough gap to get all the way across the road. **DO NOT BLOCK INTERSECTIONS** or get caught with a portion of your vehicle left in a traffic lane with approaching vehicles. Make sure you can safely complete the cross or entering maneuver before you begin.

PASSING DEFENSIVELY: Whenever signs or road markings permit you to pass, you will have to judge whether you have enough room to safely pass. Do NOT count on having enough time to pass several vehicles at once. Be safe. As a general rule pass only one vehicle at a time. Remember passing does NOT entitle you to exceed the speed limit. At 55 M.P.H. you will need about ten (10) seconds to complete the pass of a single vehicle. That means you need a ten-second gap in oncoming traffic and sight distance to pass. You must judge whether you will have enough space to safely pass.

- **Safely Finishing the Pass:** Do NOT pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. Do NOT count on other drivers to make room for you. You will need enough room between your vehicle and the other vehicle (“space behind”) to safely return to the driving lane. It’s safest not to return to the driving lane until you can see both headlights of the vehicle you just passed in the rearview mirror.

ALLOW SPACE FOR DANGEROUS SITUATIONS OR PROBLEM DRIVERS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

- **People who cannot see you:** Anyone who cannot see you may enter your path without knowing you are there. Such as:
 - Drivers at intersections or driveways where their view is blocked by buildings, trees or other vehicles.
 - Pedestrians with umbrellas in front of their faces or with their hats pulled down
 - Blind pedestrians with white cane or guide dogs.
- **People who may be distracted:** Even when others can see you, allow extra room if you think they may be distracted such as:
 - Delivery persons
 - Drivers who are not paying attention to their driving (talking on cell phones, looking at maps, arguing with passengers or trying to take care of children in the car).
- **People who may be confused:** People who are confused may cause an unsafe situation such as:
 - Tourists or persons driving cars with out-of-state license plates (especially at complicated intersections).
 - Drivers looking for street signs or house numbers..
- **Drivers in trouble:** If another driver makes a mistake (a driver who passes you when they do not have enough room, for example), do NOT make it worse. Slow down and let them safely return to the driving lane. Other situations include:
 - If another driver needs to suddenly change lanes, slow down and let them merge.
 - A driver who is about to be forced into your lane by another merging vehicle, lane closed due to construction, bicyclists, pedestrians or children on the roadside, etc.

These gestures will keep traffic moving smoothly and safely.

Scanning the Road and Traffic for Defensive Reactions

Most of what you do as a defensive driver is in response to what you SEE while driving. When driving, we gather 90% of the information about the road and our surroundings

through our eyes. Scanning means looking at the entire scene for anything that might come into your path. As you scan the road, avoid a fixed stare. Keep your eyes moving and learn to read the road. Look ahead, to the sides and behind you.

Scan Ahead – looking ahead will help you see things early and will allow you more time to react. Defensive drivers try to focus their eyes 10 to 15 seconds (about the distance of 1 city block) ahead.

Scan to the Sides – Scan from side to side, checking for directional signs, cars or people that might be in the road by the time you reach them.

Watch for Clues – Look for exhaust smoke, brake or back-up lights and turned wheels on vehicles. Clues like these indicate that the vehicles may pull into your path.

Be Careful in Rural Areas – Watch for hidden intersections and driveways, curves, hills and different road conditions (pavement changing to gravel or dirt road, narrowing road, etc.).

Check Left to Right Before Entering an Intersection – At any intersection, look to the left first, since cars coming from the left will be closer to you. Then look to the right and take one more quick look to the left before you drive through.

Look Behind – Use your rearview mirror to check the traffic behind you frequently, about every 10 seconds. This will alert you if someone is moving up too quickly or tailgating you. Be sure to check the traffic behind you when changing lanes, backing up, slowing down quickly or driving down a long steep hill. But don't keep your eyes off the road ahead for more than a brief look behind.

By knowing the speed and position of traffic on all four sides of your vehicle, you will be better able to make decisions quickly and safely in most situations.

Communicating with other Drivers

Communicating means clearly showing other drivers and pedestrians what you plan to do early enough to avoid a collision. Any time you plan to change directions, use your turn signals – whether you are changing lanes, turning at an intersection, entering an interstate, pulling away from a curb or pulling off to the side of the road. Develop the habit of using your turn signals even when you do not see other vehicles on the road.

Adjusting Speed to Conditions

Slow Speed / Impeding the Traffic Flow – No driver shall drive at such a slow speed as to hold back or block the normal and reasonable flow of traffic.

Speed Control Benefits Everyone – As your speed increases, so does your car's wind resistance, a big factor in gasoline mileage. Most automobiles get about 28% more miles per gallon on the highway at 50 M.P.H. than at 70 and about 21% more at 55 M.P.H. than at 70.

Driving at moderate speeds also:

- Provides you with better stopping and evasive control in emergency situations
- Helps you to maintain the "safety cushion" around your vehicle.

- Reduces the risk of death or serious injury to victims in the event of a crash or other accident.
- Helps to maintain a safer traffic flow, discouraging others from zipping in and out of lanes recklessly.
- Is a key factor in driving safely and defensively.

Compromise

Another important defensive driving skill is compromise. When you cannot separate risks, and you must deal with two or more at the same time, compromise by giving the most room to either the greatest or most likely danger. For example, suppose you are driving on a two-lane roadway with oncoming cars to your left and a child riding a bike to your right. The child is the most likely to move suddenly, so you need a larger space cushion to the right. In this case, moving closer to the centerline is the correct or best compromise.

Knowledge and Experience

Becoming a good defensive driver requires knowledge and experience. The beginning driver should learn through instruction, observation and practice. After you obtain your learner permit, practice starting, stopping and vehicle control in a parking lot or other open area with little traffic. Practice will sharpen your basic skills, as well as build your confidence.

Your knowledge should include recognition of the hazards of driving and how to protect yourself. Skill is more than eye/hand/foot coordination. It is a well-rehearsed driving strategy, which involves anticipation, reaction and the constant changing of the space between your vehicle and other vehicles. You must continually strive for improvement. Improvement can be measured in your elimination of risk-taking, your adherence to speed limits and your ability to take corrective action when necessary.

AVOID BEING A DISTRACTED DRIVER

Distracted Driving Contributes to Many Accidents

Lack of concentration can result in a driver's failure to be observant enough to avoid an accident. Driving an automobile is a full-time job. There have been too many accidents after which the driver said (IF he survived), "I don't know what happened".

Not everything in life is under your control. But driving is! When you're behind the wheel, **YOU control your fate. That's why when you're driving, your one and only focus should be ON DRIVING.**

Did you know that:

- Traffic crashes are often caused by the **WAY** we drive?
- 85% of all reported motor vehicle crashes are caused by **DRIVER MISTAKES?**
- 25% of these police-reported crashes involve some form of **DRIVER INATTENTION.**
- NHTSA reports indicates that inattention caused 68% of rear-end crashes?
- Driver distractions or inattentive driving play a part in one out of every four motor vehicle crashes? That's more than 1.5 MILLION collisions a year – more than 4,300 crashes

each day! This information means that most of these crashes could be totally avoidable.

NOVICE TEEN DRIVERS AT HIGHER RISK: Car crashes are the number one killer of teenagers in America - more than 5,000 teens die each year. Inexperience, risk-taking and driver distractions are some reasons why. Loud music, changing discs and tapes as well as tuning the radio are also potentially deadly distractions when behind the wheel. And when a teen driver has friends in the car, the risk is even higher - the more passengers, the greater the chance of a serious crash. Here are common teen driver distractions that can be deadly:



- *Friends in other vehicles:* Don't let saying "hi" or other fun and games take your attention off the road. Never try to pass items from one moving vehicle to another.
- *Loud music or headphones:* Hearing what's going on around you is just as important as seeing. It is extremely dangerous to wear headphones or have the volume of your radio so high that it interferes with your "hearing" of traffic conditions, such as other vehicle's warning horns or emergency sirens. In most states it is illegal to wear headphones while driving.
- *The "show-off" factor:* It may be tempting to go faster, turn sharper or beat another car through an intersection. Many teens fail to realize that they are no longer just "competing for fun" and are now using a 5,000 pound "weapon" in this competition. **Keep focused on staying safe and staying alive.**

Distraction = More Than Hands and Eyes

Driver distractions are nothing new. They've been a topic of discussion since windshield wipers were introduced in cars during the early 1900s.

What is a distraction? Obviously, drivers are distracted when they take their hands off the wheel or their eyes off the road. Equally troubling, they're also distracted when they take their minds off driving - when they're thinking about things other than the road in front of them and the vehicles around them.

THREE TYPES OF DISTRACTIONS:

1. **PHYSICAL** – Distractions that cause the driver to take his or her hands off the wheel or their eyes off the road (adjusting the radio, heater or dialing a cell phone).
2. **INTELLECTUAL** – Activities that take the driver's mind off the road. Such as having an in-depth conversation, mentally preparing for a school test / job project, or thinking about a recent argument with a co-worker or family member.
3. **COMBINATION** – Some activities take you hands, eyes and mind off the task at hand. An example is reading a map while driving or checking your day planner.

Of course, you have to occasionally glance at your speedometer, fuel and other gauges. But actions like those in the following list can lead to big trouble while you're driving.

Among the most common driving distractions are:

- Adjusting the radio, CD player or climate controls
- Conversing with occupants or tending to kids in the vehicle
- Moving objects in the vehicle (pets, insect, loose items, etc.)
- Using / dialing a wireless phone
- Eating, drinking or smoking while driving
- Personal grooming (make-up, shaving, etc.) behind the wheel
- Attempting to retrieve items from purse, wallet or backseat
- Outside distractions, including:
 - Accidents or other vehicles stopped by police
 - Friends in other vehicles
 - Roadside advertising / New construction (shops, houses, etc.)

How does distraction affect driving performance?

Distraction occurs when a driver is delayed in the recognition of information needed to safely accomplish the driving task, because something within or outside the vehicle draws his attention away from driving. Drivers inadvertently sometimes focus their attention away from the roadway and driving task, thus putting themselves and their families/passengers and other motorists in jeopardy. Additional factors, such as fatigue, weather and traffic conditions, can increase the negative impact of distractions on driving ability.

Safety experts estimate that a driver makes nearly 200 decisions for every mile of driving. If you are mentally solving business, school or family problems while driving, you are adding to the total cognitive workload. Think about it; let's say you're going 60 miles per hour. If you look down for just two seconds to choose a CD or adjust the climate controls, you'll have traveled 176 feet blindly. That's more than the length of a football field.

DEVOTE YOUR COMPLETE AND UNDIVIDED ATTENTION TO DRIVING.

Don't get distracted. **Driving is a full time job requiring YOUR full time attention.** When you're behind the wheel, your responsibility is safety:

- To yourself
- To your passengers
- To motorists and others around you

ARE YOU A DISTRACTED DRIVER?

Ask yourself: When driving, do I ever?

- Tune the radio
- Eat, drink or smoke
- Pick something up from the floor or between the seats
- Reach for the glove compartment
- Talk on the cell phone
- Clean the inside of the windshield
- Argue with another passenger

- Comb or brush my hair
- Put on makeup
- Shave or “tie” my necktie
- Daydream or “site see”
- Read a paper, map, book – or – try to write or jot down notes.

If you answered yes to any of the above, you are driving while distracted and are at risk of an accident. Still not sure that you have been guilty of distracted driving? How many of the following things have ever happened to you?

- A passenger in your car screamed or gasped because of something you did or did not do?
- You ran a stop sign or traffic light unintentionally?
- You swerved suddenly to avoid an animal, a car or another highway hazard?
- You slammed on your brakes because you didn’t see the car in front of you slowing down or stopping?
- You didn’t remember driving from one place to another?
- You drifted in your lane or into another lane of traffic?

These events are clues or signals that you are distracted while driving.

Grooming on the Go is a BIG NO: It is very dangerous to remove a coat or change other articles of clothing while driving. Other activities such as applying makeup, shaving or fixing one’s hair while driving are also dangerous. These types of activities can place you in serious danger of a crash.

Eating and Driving Don’t Mix: It is not only unsafe, it’s messy, and fumbling with napkins, condiments, and beverages means you’re not watching the road. Your reaction time is slowed if an emergency arises while you have one hand on the wheel and your other hand around a soft drink you are worried about spilling.

Children, Pets and Passengers: It’s hard enough concentrating on the road without the distraction of children, pets and passengers, and adding in just one of those factors can make driving dangerous. Use a pet carrier to limit a pet’s ability to roam. Be sure children are safely buckled up, and give them books, games or other items to occupy their time. Teach children the importance of good behavior while in a vehicle.

No matter what the source, drivers who are distracted exhibit the same basic type of behavior. Distractions cause drivers to react more slowly to traffic conditions or events, such as a car stopping to make a left turn or pulling out from a side road. Drivers fail more often to recognize potential hazards such as pedestrians, bicycles or debris in the road. They also decrease their margin of safety, leading them to take risks they might not otherwise take, such as turning left in front of oncoming traffic.

To avoid falling habit to these distractions you must stay focused and pay full attention to the driving task.

- Pre-program radio stations for easy access
- Keep the stereo volume low enough to “hear” traffic
- Limit interaction with passengers and avoid arguments
- Avoid taking your eyes off the road and traffic
- Keep both hands on the wheel

- Plan your trips to allow for rest and meal breaks
- Avoid driver fatigue and don’t drive when tired

It’s worth repeating that *driving is a full time job!* It requires you full, undivided attention. When you’re behind the wheel, your number one responsibility is driving. **PERIOD.**

FASCINATING FACTS: Fully 62 percent of the crashes involving driver distraction occurred in rural areas.

- **RURAL AREA** top distractions were driver fatigue, insects, animals, and unrestrained pets.
- **URBAN AREA** top distractions were rubbernecking, traffic, other vehicles, and cell phones.

Pay attention out there!

Stay focused on the driving. Don’t be driven to distraction

The list of driver distractions that contributes to crashes and injuries is long.. The Foundation for Traffic Safety at the American Automobile Association (AAA) videotaped volunteer drivers who didn’t know they were being tested for distracted driving. It found that:

- 92% of the drivers fiddled with radios or CD players
- 71% percent ate or drank
- 46 % were involved in personal grooming
- 40% read or even wrote while driving
- Only about one-third used cell phones.

BE SMART WHEN USING CELLULAR PHONES IN CARS

Cellular telephones are everywhere. In an emergency, they can be a lifesaver. In non-emergency situations, they can be a great tool; IF you use the cellular telephone in a safe and responsible manner. However, driving while talking on the telephone can be dangerous to you and other motorists. Cell phones can be a serious source of driver inattention.



Tennessee does not currently have any laws prohibiting the use of cell phones while driving. The Department of Safety and AAA recommends drivers not use their cell phones while driving. However, if using a phone is essential, drivers should follow these safety tips

- Pull over to the side of the road to use your cellular telephone. This is the safest precaution you can take.
- Know your cellular telephone. Get to know your phone and its many features such as speed dial and redial. Take advantage of these features so you won’t take your attention off the road.
- Use hands free devices. If available, use a hands free device. *Two hands on the steering wheel is always safer than one.* Using a wireless phone while driving increases your chance of getting into an accident by 400 percent! When you’re searching for a number, dialing or talking, you’re not watching the road like you should. “Hands-free”

phone features help, but they can't prevent you from becoming involved in a conversation and losing concentration

- Your phone should be within easy reach; this way you can grab it without taking your eyes off the road.
- Don't use the telephone during hazardous conditions. If your driving conditions include heavy traffic or severe weather tell the person that you are driving and will call back. **Remember, your first responsibility is to pay attention to the road.**
- While you are driving, don't take notes or look up phone numbers.
- Be sensible about dialing. If possible, place your calls when you are not moving or before pulling into traffic. However, if you need to dial while driving, dial only a few numbers at a time, check traffic, your mirrors and then continue dialing.
- Don't engage in distracting conversations. *Stressful or emotional conversations don't mix with safe driving.* **This combination can be dangerous because you are not paying attention to your driving.** Tell the person you are talking to you'll call back. Be safe!
- Use your phone to call for help. Dial 9-1-1 for emergency help. This is a free call on your cellular phone. For other non-emergency situations (broken-down vehicle, broken traffic signal, etc.), call roadside assistance or special non-emergency wireless numbers.

NOTE! Research shows that the real distraction is mental because you're talking to someone else outside of your car. Holding the phone and dialing it is just a small part of phone distractions. It is recommended that you do NOT use the phone at all while driving. If you still want to drive and talk on the phone, please try to reduce distractions with tips above. Remember...talking on your phone while driving is not worth killing someone and living with that guilt the rest of your life.

DROWSY DRIVING DANGERS

Sleepiness while driving has become a serious problem and a major traffic hazard. Fatigue and sleepiness seriously impairs driver performance, creating a life threatening combination.

The Facts: According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) every year, falling asleep while driving is responsible for at least 100,000 automobile crashes, 40,000 injuries, and 1,550 fatalities. These crashes most often occur during late night / early morning hours (midnight to six A.M), involve a single vehicle and a sober driver traveling alone, with the car leaving the roadway without any attempt to avoid the crash. Most often these crashes occur on high-speed



roadways. **Drowsy Driving is a problem most people don't stop to think about.**

Fatigue may account for the fact that there are more collisions during evening rush hour traffic than during the comparable morning rush. Drivers going home from work are tired, less alert and slower to react than during the morning rush. Fatigue also can cause a driver to lose his or her temper or make a rash decision.

When most people think about someone being unfit to drive, they usually think of someone drunk or physically unable to drive. In fact, most people are at some time unfit to drive because they are too tired and not alert to changing road and traffic conditions.

Causes of Drowsy Driving

- Sleep loss
- Driving patterns. For example, driving between midnight and six A.M. every night.
- Use of sedating medications.
- Untreated or unrecognized sleeping disorders.
- Use of alcohol.

High-Risk Populations for Drowsy Driving

- Young people between the ages of 16 - 29, especially males.
- Shift workers whose sleep is disrupted by working nights or working long, irregular hours.
- People with untreated sleep apnea and narcolepsy.

Drowsy driving is more common than you think.

About one-half of all American adult drivers - approximately 100 million people - admit to driving drowsy in the past year; two in ten say they actually fell asleep behind the wheel. Drowsy driving is more prevalent among males (56% males vs. 45% females), especially young males (16-29 years old).

How to Prevent Drowsy Driving

- Plan ahead to get sufficient sleep before hitting the road. The average person requires about 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Avoid alcohol and medications (over-the-counter and prescribed) that may impair performance. Alcohol interacts with fatigue, increasing its effects - much like drinking on an empty stomach.
- Limit driving between midnight and six A.M.
- If driving on a long trip, schedule regular stops, say every 100 miles or two hours.
- Plan to drive long trips with a companion. Passengers can help look for early warning signs of fatigue or switch drivers when needed.
- Passengers should stay awake to talk to the driver. As soon as a driver becomes sleepy, he or she should stop driving and either let a licensed passenger drive or stop for some sleep before continuing.
- Drink coffee or another source of caffeine. Caffeine can promote *short-term alertness*, but it takes about 30 minutes for it to enter the bloodstream. **Blasting a radio, opening a window, or similar "tricks" to stay awake DO NOT work.**

Having trouble staying awake? Should you take a break?

1. Have you suddenly realized you're tailgating, or drifted from your lane, or onto the shoulder of the roadway?
2. Are you driving on the white lines or have you driven over roadside *rumble strips?
3. Have you had trouble remembering the last few miles driven; missing exits or traffic signs.
4. Are your eyes closing or going out of focus?
5. Have you been yawning, blinking frequently, or head nodding?
6. Are your eyes starting to burn?
7. Have you been shaking your head to stay awake?
8. Did you roll down your window for some fresh air?
9. Do you need caffeine or chocolate to help you stay alert?
10. Are you not able to remember the last warning sign you passed?

If you answer YES to three or more of these questions, you should take a break from your driving. If you are not stopping for the night, find a safe, well-lit area and take a 15-20 minute nap.

**What are Rumble Strips?*

Rumble Strips are raised or grooved patterns on the road shoulder that provide both an audible warning and physical vibration to alert drivers that they have wandered off the roadway.



Tennessee has been installing rumble strips on all interstate resurfacing projects since 1996. Recent nationwide statistics from the Federal Highway Administration indicate run-off-the-road fatalities comprise almost 1/3 of all fatalities.

Remember that wearing your safety belt is the best way to protect yourself in the event of a crash caused by drowsy driving.

SPECIAL WARNINGS DRIVERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF:

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Beware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Vehicle motors give off carbon monoxide which is a deadly gas. You can't see, smell, or taste it, but carbon monoxide gas from your engine can kill you! Carbon monoxide is most likely to leak into your car when the heater is running, when your exhaust system is not working properly, or when you're in heavy traffic and breathing exhaust fumes from other cars. A faulty exhaust system can leak poisonous fumes into the back seat area where children may be sitting or sleeping.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning:

- You feel drowsy and/or dizzy.

- Skin has a blue color; lips turn blue.
- Lights seem brighter.
- Your forehead tightens.

Pull off the road, park, and turn off the motor. Open your windows. Relax or get out and walk around until you feel better. A child or passenger overcome with carbon monoxide may require artificial respiration or medical attention.

How to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Have your exhaust system checked regularly by a mechanic
- Be alert for any unusual roar from under the car.
- Do not drive with a defective muffler or exhaust system.
- Never let the engine run in a closed garage.
- Do not leave the motor running and windows closed when you are parked.
- Do not use the heater or air conditioner in a parked vehicle with the windows closed.
- In congested traffic, close the fresh-air vent.
- On the highways in cold weather, open the fresh-air vent.

Warning! When It's Hot Outside, Do Not Leave Children Unattended in a Vehicle.

On a hot summer day, the interior of a car can get dangerously hot. One study found that with the windows up and the temperature outside at 94 degrees, the inside of a car could be 122 degrees in just half an hour, or 132 degrees after a single hour.

An adult or child can develop potentially fatal heat-related health problems inside a parked vehicle when outside temperatures reach 85 degrees. Toddlers and infants are at particular risk because their bodies sweat less, and because unlike most adults, they are unable to get out of a vehicle when they begin to overheat.

Prevent a needless tragedy, and make sure no one leaves small children in a hot vehicle unattended.

Don't forget about family pets. Leaving a family pet in a vehicle during hot weather can also be deadly for the animal.

Be Cautious with Vehicles Equipped with Ignition-Starter Interlock System

Today's vehicles are equipped with ignition interlock systems, that, when used properly, will prevent the theft of an automobile and vehicle rollaway. The U.S. Department of Transportation has passed standards for these systems.

USDOT amended the standard for motor vehicle theft protection and vehicle rollaway, specifically those driving vehicles with automatic transmissions. This rule provided for greater flexibility in designing key-locking and transmission shift locking systems. It permits key removal only when the vehicle's transmission is in "Park" position.

Drivers in an emergency situation on the highway may attempt to turn off the vehicle while it is still in motion, believing they will bring the vehicle to a stop. The basic rule the driver must follow when operating a vehicle with a steering wheel interlock system is: ***never turn the ignition to***

There are various types of Steering Lock Operation:

- **The Transmission Park System:** Park. Shift the transmission into the park position. Turn key to LOCK and remove.
- **The Two-Hand Button System:** Park. This system requires two hands. Depress the button below the steering column. Turn key to LOCK and remove.
- **The Lever System:** Park. Depress the lever located near the ignition. Turn key to LOCK and remove.
- **The One-Hand Button System:** Park. Depress button located near the ignition. Turn key to LOCK and remove.
- **The Push-In System:** Park. Turn key to OFF, push in. Turn key to LOCK and remove.
- **The Turn and Remove System:** Park. Turn key to LOCK and remove.

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the lock position while the vehicle is in motion. Your steering wheel will lock as you try to turn the wheel, and you'll lose control of the vehicle.

AGGRESSIVE DRIVING OR "ROAD RAGE"

Once you get behind the wheel, you have a personal - and legal - responsibility to yourself, your family and friends, and to the other people on the roads to keep a "right attitude" for driving. The RIGHT ATTITUDE can help you, and others, stay safe and alive. Whether you're in a metropolitan area rush hour or driving a deserted rural highway, you should maintain safety consciousness, a cooperative attitude, and a "readiness to respond" to an emergency.

Right Attitudes for the Road -

Alertness, Sharing, Giving, Self-Control

- Give your driving your full attention.
- Obey the law.
- Share the road with others and remember the "Golden Rule"
- Be alert for potential collisions.
- Control your emotions so they don't interfere with your driving.
- Give yourself a cushion of safety and allow others the same.

Road Rage

Aggressive driving - tailgating, honking, fist and hand gestures, yelling, speeding, cutting off other drivers, and more recently, the use of firearms - has become a real danger on America's highways. Drivers taking out their stress and anger on other drivers have been called "the fastest-growing menace on the highway today".

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) says about 66% of all traffic fatalities annually are caused by aggressive driving behaviors, such as passing on the right, running red lights and tailgating.

Experts say there may be several reasons why road rage is rising. We are all under more stress. A person who is hostile and frustrated by traffic congestion or problems on the job or at home gets in his car - ready to fight. His car becomes an "ego-enhancer", and he uses it to dominate and intimidate others.

Maybe it's impatience at slowed-down traffic conditions that makes a driver speed and take risks. Some people "take a stand" on the highway and won't let other drivers pass them.

Because road rage is increasing every year, you must learn to protect yourself against aggressive drivers. **If you have a tendency to get irritated and angry behind the wheel, you must learn to change your attitude and your behavior.** Otherwise, you are an accident looking for a place to happen. Law enforcement and insurance companies are getting much tougher on aggressive drivers. They simply cause too many collisions.

Are You an Aggressive Driver?

Do you tend to drive too fast, want to be first, want to teach the bad driver a lesson, or keep that other car from getting by you?

Do you speed up when someone tries to pass you, tailgate people who are going slower than you, weave in and out of traffic lanes or pass cars on the right shoulder?

Do you flash your headlights at vehicles to get them to let you pass, use your car horn when angry or upset with traffic jams or other drivers?

Do you make obscene gestures or glare threateningly at other drivers, yell out your window at pedestrians or other drivers or race for a position on the highway?

NHTSA considers these behaviors to be examples of aggressive driving. So next time, think twice before doing any of these things. You should recognize aggressive

***BEFORE YOU TURN ON YOUR ENGINE,
TURN OFF YOUR ANGER!***

tendencies in yourself and learn how to overcome behavior that leads to unsafe driving. Otherwise, you may wind up losing your driver license - or worse, losing your life.

What You Can Do To Stay Safe

- "Drive right" and reduce the chance of making another driver lash out.
- Keep away from people who are "driving crazy".
- Avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver.
- Stay cool - keep looking straight ahead and refuse to become part of the problem.
- Don't join in the confrontation, even if it's just honking your horn or glaring back. Just get out of the way. Don't make it worse:
 - Don't make obscene gestures
 - Don't block passing or right-turn lanes.
 - Don't tailgate.
 - Don't use bright lights when following.
 - Don't take more than one parking space.
 - Avoid bumping into another car when you open your car door.

- Drive defensively. Watch out for and avoid drivers who change lanes frequently.
- Give an angry driver plenty of space. If you make a driving error (even accidentally), it is possible the other driver may try and “pick a fight” with you. Put as much distance between your vehicle and the other car as you can.
- Don’t cut off other drivers. When you merge, make sure you have enough room and always signal before you merge.
- Lock your doors
- When stopped in traffic, leave enough space to pull out from behind the car you are following.
- Keep your radio/stereo volume down at a reasonable level.
- Limit use of your car phone to urgent or emergency calls only.
- Don’t let talking on your car phone distract you.
- Don’t travel in the passing lane, and use signals when you do change lanes.
- Don’t insist on the right-of-way if another driver challenges you.
- Don’t take traffic problems personally. Be polite, even when someone else is rude.
- Don’t be tempted to start a fight or carry any sort of weapon. These acts may provoke an assault.
- If a driver follows you, go to a police station or a public place where you can get help. If you are harassed on the road, get the offender’s license tag number and report the incident to the authorities.

DON’T GET MAD - GET BETTER!

Suggestions for Avoiding Road Rage:

- Plan ahead - allow up to 50% more time for a trip of any length. Take along a favorite tape or recorded book. Enjoy the trip.

- The competitor who always sees finish lines and goal posts must realize that driving is NOT A GAME to be won. Concentrate on the pleasures of driving and drive yourself healthy.
- Drive relaxed and within the speed limit, passing only when necessary. The change will surprise you.
- Don’t take someone else’s careless or thoughtless driving personally. Everyone gets distracted and makes mistakes. Remember to relax and “mind your own business” on the road.
- Keep cool.
- Decide to arrive alive and allow other drivers the same advantage.

**Make a difference in keeping the roads safe for everyone
- Act Responsibly!**

***YOU CAN’T CONTROL TRAFFIC, BUT YOU CAN
CONTROL YOUR REACTION TO IT!***

The most dangerous influences on the highway?

- Impatience
- Frustration
- Anger

The most potent precautions on the highway?

- Buckle Up!
- Slow Down!
- Driver Sober!

The best way to stay alive is to keep it under the speed limit, don’t drink and drive, and always wear your seat belt. Each and every time. And insist that everyone else in the car is buckled up too. **No Exceptions! Act Responsibility!**